

Research Activity Panel Meeting Summary

Gregor M. Cailliet, MLML, RAP Chair

AUGUST RAP MEETING

Host: Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Ecological Reserve

Friday 11 August, 2000

Attendance: 13 RAP members and 9 guests

PRESENTATIONS

ESNERR UPDATE Becky Christensen summarized the history of the Elkhorn Slough reserve, jointly operated by CDFG and NOAA as one of about 25 sites nationwide. The third partner is the Elkhorn Slough Foundation (ESF), an independent, non-profit foundation that helps fund projects in and around the Reserve. She stressed how the slough had changed over the past and reviewed some of the management decisions that had been made, stressing its conservation, education and research roles. Kerstin Wasson, the Research Coordinator of the Reserve, then summarized the past, ongoing, and potential future research projects on Elkhorn Slough and neighboring lands. She reviewed the baseline surveys, voucher collections of specimens at MLML, and photos available on their web page, that had occurred in past years. Several long-term monitoring projects are underway but more are needed. Kerstin summarized the major threats to the slough ecosystem: scour, erosion, pollution, and invasive species (one of her research specialties). Finally, she reviewed the many restoration ecology projects underway and invited researchers to join them.

DISCUSSION

Nearshore Mapping Project

Rikk Kvitek summarized the work that he, his students at CSUMB, and Gary Greene at MLML had done on specific nearshore locations within the MBNMS, indicating that unique geological features had been discovered, with evidence that they served as marine fish habitat. He also emphasized future directions that their habitat mapping research will take and the RAP discussed the various ecological and socioeconomic implications of publicly releasing the high resolution maps on sea floor habitats.

September RAP Meeting and BBQ

Greg Cailliet discussed the plans for the September RAP meeting at the new MLML building, following which there will be a special MLML seminar on deep-sea ecology learned from recent underwater cable research projects. Then, the MBNMS will host the annual RAP barbecue for all CWG, SEP, BTAP, SAC and staff members at 5:00.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Introduced Species Threat

Jen Makowka summarized what was known about *Caulerpa taxifolia*, an introduced marine alga now inhabiting estuaries in southern California. Researchers in California are keeping their eyes open to its possible spread to other areas.

Sustainable Seas Expedition 2000

Jen also summarized the accomplishments of the 2000 SSE. The research staff is reviewing the SSE and requested RAP assistance. Rikk Kvitek and Chris Harrold volunteered.